



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
RUTH JOHNSON, SECRETARY OF STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
LANSING

February 4, 2015

## Michigan Bureau of Elections

Michigan election law, MCL 168.21, designates the Secretary of State as the state's "chief election officer":

"The secretary of state shall be the chief election officer of the state and shall have supervisory control over local election officials in the performance of their duties under the provisions of this act."

The Bureau of Elections was established under legislation enacted in 1951 to assist with the administration of the Secretary of State's election-related duties and responsibilities.

Major Program areas:

- 1) Election Administration
- 2) Campaign Finance
- 3) Lobbyist Disclosure
- 4) Great Seal

### 1) Election Administration

**Michigan election system:**

- One of the most decentralized in the country. The Bureau of Elections supervises and assists 83 county clerks, 279 city clerks and 1,240 township clerks - all who administer elections independently.
- 4,829 precincts statewide; the majority of jurisdictions in the state consist of a single precinct.

TOTAL PRECINCTS	# OF JURISDICTIONS
1 Precinct	979
2 Precincts	201
3-10 Precincts	269
11-20 Precincts	35
21-50 Precincts	31
Over 50 Precincts	4
Total	1,519

## Major Programs:

- Qualified Voter File (QVF)
  - First developed in 1996 – national model
  - 1,019 jurisdictions with access; remaining are supported by counties
  - Voter registration, AV ballot issuance, election geography, election administration
  - Tie to Driver File
  - Active / Inactive Voters
    - Total Registered Voters: 7,272,157
    - Active: 6,541,289
    - Inactive: 730,868
    - Inactive = has not voted in six years or has not responded to a confirmation notice
  - Other Programs Generated from QVF:
    - Michigan Voter Information Center (MVIC) – [www.michigan.gov/vote](http://www.michigan.gov/vote) (mobile version also available)
    - Electronic creation and transmission of military/overseas ballots
    - Optical scan ballot creation / programming / test files (including ballots for accessible voting system)
    - Official Candidate Listing
    - Canvass Reporting
    - Election Night Reporting (pilot phase, 17 counties)
    - Electronic Pollbook (EPB)
    - Election Management Portal (EMP) – online AV tracking



- Voting systems
  - Statewide – optical scan
  - Help America Vote Act – statewide contracts/purchase 2004-2005
  - Reaching end of life – Request for Proposal (RFP) process underway
  - Begin replacement in 2016
  - Funding issues

- Education / Training for Election Officials:
  - Clerk Accreditation (new clerks) – comprehensive, two-day class
  - Continuing Education / Two-Year Re-accreditation Program – required under legislation passed in 2012; modular format, combination in-person and online training
  - Online Training Program (*Elections eLearning Center*):
    - One-stop resource for election official training
    - Majority of ongoing education components housed here
    - Close to 3,000 users enrolled (clerks, deputies, other election staff)
    - Online training courses
    - Videos
    - Manuals/Resources
    - Registration for in-person classes
    - Electronic data collection (post-election reports, Federal reporting requirements)
    - Accreditation exercises / exams
    - Communications
    - User groups / blogs
    - Webinars / remote training
    - Tracking by individual user/clerk
  - Training Schools – in person sessions held in even years, 8-10 regional sessions for counties and larger jurisdictions that conduct Election Inspector training
  - Election Cycle – in person update in even years, one session per county for all clerks in county; covers all major election year issues (filing to canvassing)
  - Board of County Canvassers – in person session in even years, 20 regional sessions
  - Technical Training
    - Qualified Voter File (QVF) – weekly, in-person small groups
    - Electronic Pollbook (EPB) – weekly, in-person small groups
    - Election Management Portal (EMP) – AV tracking (new system)
    - Online (modular format), webinar options available via eLearning Center
- Electronic Pollbook (EPB)
  - Internally developed
  - Replaces traditional paper pollbook
  - Faster, more accurate voter check-in, ballot issuance, voter history updates
  - Requires less staff in polling place
  - 92% of precincts statewide

- Military/Overseas Voting
  - 45-day deadline for transmitting ballots
  - E-transmittal; Hard-copy mail return
  - 3,345 military/overseas ballots cast (Nov. 2014)
  - Late-transmitted ballots: extended ballot receipt deadline (2012 law change)
- Board of State Canvassers
  - Four-member bipartisan Board responsible for certifying petitions, canvassing elections, approving new voting equipment for use in the state, and approving state/county officer recall language and petition filings
  - Secretary of State schedules and coordinates meetings
- Petition Processing – BOE receives and processes:
  - Nominating and qualifying petitions filed by candidates seeking federal and state offices
  - New political party petitions
  - Initiative and referendum petitions
  - Recall petitions filed against federal, state and county officers
- Ballot Production Standards
  - BOE publishes with clerk input
  - Updated annually
  - Ensures consistent approach
- Post-Election Audits
  - Legislation passed in late 2012
  - Pilot program in 2013 (16 county volunteers)
  - Statewide beginning in Nov 2014
  - Over 600 audits conducted thus far
  - Focus: pre-election, Election Day and post-election process verification
  - Post-audit follow-up assignments and training (via eLearning Center)
  - State, counties may audit
    - Counties audit precincts randomly selected by state

## **2) Campaign Finance**

- Bureau of Elections oversees Secretary of State duties related to enforcement of the Campaign Finance Act and to disclosure by reviewing filings submitted by candidates, committees, and political parties.
- *Electronic Filing*: Michigan Electronic Reporting and Tracking System (MERTS) - a program which permits the electronic submission of campaign finance disclosure documents by committees registered on the state level.

### CAMPAIGN FINANCE FILINGS: 2014

	Candidate Committees	Gubernatorial Committees	PACs	Parties	Ballot Questions	Totals
Active	1,639	15	1,224	247	88	3,213
Waiver*	907	10	360	109	56	1,442
No Waiver	732	5	864	138	32	1,771

\*Waiver = Filings \$1,000 or less are not required to report.

### Campaign Finance Filings: 2014 Compliance

Number of Statements Required	7,015
Percentage of Filings Received Electronically	93%
Number of Failure to File Notifications Sent	662
Number 2012 Campaign Finance reports outstanding	183
Number of Referrals to the Attorney General (Failure to File)	360

### 3) Lobbyist Disclosure

The Bureau of Elections is responsible for registering lobbyists and lobby agents under the Michigan Lobby Registration Act. Lobbyists are typically interest groups; lobbyist agents are the individuals and firms that represent these interest groups.

#### LOBBY REGISTRATION

	Lobbyist	Lobby Agents	Total
Active	1,428	1,478	2,906

### Lobby Registration: 2014 Compliance

Number of Statements Required	5,912
Percentage of Filings Received Electronically	77%
Number of Failure to File Notifications Sent	177
Number of Referrals to the Attorney General (Failure to File)	24

### 4) Great Seal

Duties of the Office of the Great Seal include:

- Keeper of the Great Seal – affixes the State Seal to authorized items/documents and ensure its proper use.
- Accepts documents for filing from certain local and state government officials, including:
  - Boundary changes
  - Executive Orders of the Governor
  - Public Acts

- Commission Notaries: approximately 1,700 notaries public are commissioned each month. The total number of notaries public currently commissioned in the State of Michigan is over 105,000.
- Certifies the authenticity of a Michigan official's signature and the capacity that official acted in.